



# A study on Internet Addiction and Family Interaction Pattern among adolescents with special reference to Meenachil Taluk in Kottayam district

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## Abstract

Internet addiction is an emerging issue in which children spend lots of time in online and eventually loss connection with the outer world especially with the family. It may badly affect their family interaction patterns. Internet can be considered as an innovation in the field of technology. But the over dependency in internet may cause significant impairment in family life especially among adolescents. As it is a serious issue the researcher tried to find out the adolescent's internet addiction and how it affects their family interaction pattern. For this the researcher selected 60 students between the age group 15-17 studying in higher secondary schools of Meenachil Taluk. The design adopted is diagnostic research design. The data is collected by using standardized scale named Internet Addiction Test (IAT) and Family Interaction Pattern Scale. Purposive sampling is used to collect the data. The data obtained was analyzed by using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Correlation and t-test were used as inferential statistics. Researcher identified that even though the internet addiction doesn't affect family interaction pattern but the 48% of the total sample reached moderate level of addiction needed to pay attention.

**Keywords:** *Internet addiction, family interaction pattern, adolescents*

## INTRODUCTION

Internet addiction is an emerging issue in which people spend lots of time in online and eventually loss connection with the outer world especially with the family. It may affect their family interaction pattern which includes the

communication, cohesion, role, reinforcement, leadership and social support system patterns. Several studies have been proven that among the internet addicts', adolescents are more prone to excessive usage of internet and spend more time in solitary activities in online and spend less time with real world people. Excessive Internet use has not been considered as a disorder by the World Health Organization or the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5); however, gaming disorder has been included in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11).

The excessive use of internet is increasing day by day. Internet can be considered as an innovation in the field of technology. As internet has various purposes and became an inevitable part of everyone's life. But the over dependency in internet may develops addiction and it can cause significant impairment in family life. It may negatively affect the family interaction among the members of the family. As adolescents are more prone to internet addiction, several studies in recent years showed that it will negatively affects their interaction pattern in the family. This study helps to have an insight in determining the internet addiction among adolescent and how it will affect their family interaction pattern. As family is considered as the primary agent of socialization, there need to have strong emotional bonds between the members. The addictive nature of internet may harm the relationship and the study helps to contribute for identifying the relation between internet addiction and family interaction among adolescents

The purpose of the study is to assess the internet addiction and how it affects their family interaction pattern of adolescent studying in higher secondary schools. The objectives are to study the socio demographic profile of adolescents, level of internet addiction among adolescents, to understand the social life of adolescents, to study the family interaction pattern of adolescent internet users, to study the reinforcement pattern and also to the social work implications among adolescent as internet users. Adolescent encounter many issues due to internet use but the study focused on analyzing the patterns of family interaction of adolescent internet user. The study also helpful for identifying the social work implications to prevent the internet addiction.

## **METHODS**

The population of the study involves the higher secondary school students between the age group 15-18 in the Meenachil Taluk of Kottayam district which was selected purposefully from different schools. The samples

contain 47 Males and 13 Females and the questionnaires used in this study were distributed by the researcher in different classes and helped them to understand the questions as it is.

To collect the Internet addiction data, Young’s Internet Addiction scale (1998) were used which is a 20-item scale that measures the presence and severity of Internet dependency which consists of Salience, Excessive use, Neglect work, Anticipation, Lack of control and Neglect of social life. Each item is rated on a 5-point scale and the maximum score is 100 points and the minimum is 20.

To assess the family interaction pattern of adolescents Family Interaction Pattern Scale (FIPS) by Dr. Ranbir.S Bhatti, D.K. Subba Krishna and Benedicta L. Ageira, 1986 were administered which consists of 106 items pertaining to six areas - Leadership, Communication, Role, Reinforcement, Cohesiveness and Support System. Family Interaction Pattern Scale is a four- point scale in which the total score varies from 106 and 424.

**RESULTS**

Table 1 shows that there doesn’t exist any correlation between the Internet addiction and Family interaction pattern of adolescents. From Table 2, it can be seen that t test was administered to understand the significant difference between the level of addiction and social life of adolescents and that there exists a statistical difference between the variables. And the Table 3 shows there exists a correlation between the Internet addiction and reinforcement pattern.

Table 1

*Significant relationship between internet addiction and family interaction pattern*

| Family Interaction Pattern |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Internet Addiction         | ‘r’ value .238       |
|                            | Sig. (2-tailed) .067 |
|                            | N 60                 |

Table 2

*Significant difference between level of addiction and social life of adolescents*

|                    | N  | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--------------------|----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Level_of_Addiction |    |      |                |                 |
| Moderate           | 29 | 3.76 | 1.272          | .236            |
| Low                | 31 | 2.52 | 1.730          | .311            |

Table 3

*Significant relationship between internet addiction and reinforcement pattern*

|           | Reinforcement total |
|-----------|---------------------|
| IAT_Total |                     |
|           | r' value            |
|           | .365                |
|           | Sig. (2-tailed)     |
|           | .004                |
|           | N                   |
|           | 60                  |

**DISCUSSION**

Based on the study among the 60 respondents, 48% of the sample represents the category of moderate level addiction. 52% are of having low level addiction. And there is no severely addicted person. Correlation is done to know whether there is any significant relationship between internet addiction and family interaction pattern of respondents. The table shows that the 'r' value obtained is 0.238. The significant value obtained is 0.067. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that, there is no significant relationship between internet addiction and family interaction. The t test is done to know whether there exist any there is a significant difference between

level of addiction and social life of adolescents. The 't' value obtained is 3.152 and significant value obtained is 0.003, which is lower than the level of significance 0.05. Hence null hypothesis is failed to accept. It indicates that there is a significant difference between level of addiction and social life of adolescents. Correlation is done to know whether there is any significant relationship between internet addiction and reinforcement pattern of respondents. The table shows that the 'r' value obtained is 0.365. The significant value obtained is 0.004. Hence the research hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that, there is a significant relationship between internet addiction and reinforcement pattern.

## SUGGESTIONS

Let's put a step forward to create an awareness among the children as well as for the families about the difference between internet use and abuse. Also can provide counseling services for those students having problematic internet use and their families and can make aware about limiting the amount of screen time and spend more time on outdoor activities and make family as a priority to share rather than online gadgets.

Family support is one of the most important thing to prevent the internet addiction among the adolescents. Training can be provided to teachers in order to find out the risk associated with internet over use. Promotion of school-based intervention programmes for adolescent internet addiction would help them to understand the bad effects of internet. This study suggests that there is a need to take care of the adolescents who reached moderate level of addiction as they can be considered as a risk group at this age.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this twentieth century a world without internet is unimaginable. Technology has taken up its own role along with the other inventions. Of these it is important to realize what is internet use and abuse. As we all know adolescent age is considered as a problematic age group in which both physical and psychological changes has been happened. Many of the research studies showed that adolescents are more prone to internet addiction. And also there exists some dysfunctions in their family system. So in this present study the researcher tried to find out the level of addiction among adolescents and the family interaction pattern with special reference to Meenachil Taluk in Kottayam district. In this study tested the relationship between internet addiction and family interaction, level of internet addiction and social life and also internet addiction and reinforcement pattern. Two research

hypothesis and one null hypothesis are accepted. Through findings researcher found that the level of internet addiction at moderate level is 48% and 52% are of having low level addiction and there are no normal users. The researcher could able to identify that even though there is no effect on family interaction but there exist significant cause that the 48% adolescents of the total sample has reached moderate level of addiction. And the social workers are superheroes in managing the adolescent issues and can use their professional knowledge and skills in dealing with the children who are at the midst of internet overuse. The researcher gave an awareness about the internet addiction among the children which includes the difference between internet use and abuse.

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